R E P O R T R E S U M E S

ED 017 599 UD 005 670

AN IN-SERVICE PROGRAM TO PROVIDE GREATER EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHILDREN ATTENDING DESEGREGATED CLASSROOMS IN THE CAIRO AND EGYPTIAN SCHOOL DISTRICTS, ALEXANDER COUNTY, ILLINOIS.

BY- OSBURN, MORRIS
ALEXANDER COUNTY INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL DIST., ILL.

GRANT OEG-3-7-000173-2692
EDRS PRICE MF-$0.25 HC-$0.32 6P.

DESCRIPTORS- *SCHOOL INTEGRATION, *TEACHERS, *ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL, INSERVICE PROGRAMS, *COMMUNITY LEADERS, SCHOOL ORGANIZATION, EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS, INSTITUTES (TRAINING PROGRAMS), SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION, SCHOOL COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIP, BOARDS OF EDUCATION, RACIAL ATTITUDES, CAIRO SCHOOL DISTRICT, ILLINOIS, EGYPTIAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

TEACHERS, SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS, AND COMMUNITY LEADERS FROM TWO ILLINOIS SCHOOL DISTRICTS PARTICIPATED IN EIGHT 5-HOUR TRAINING SESSIONS TO RECOMMEND SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEMS WHICH HAD ARISEN FROM RECENT CLASSROOM DESEGREGATION. THEY INVESTIGATED THE EFFECT OF DESEGREGATION ON EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS, SCHOOL ORGANIZATION, AND SCHOOL PRACTICES, AND EXAMINED THE NATURE OF PREJUDICE. THE PARTICIPANTS WERE SPECFICALLY CONCERNED WITH SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS, ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP, AND SCHOOL BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES. LARGE GROUP PRESENTATIONS BY SPECIAL CONSULTANTS AND SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS WERE BASIC FEATURES OF THE SESSIONS. (LB)

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The Cairo Project

Grant Award No. OEG 3-7-000173-2692

Project No. 500-58

UD005170

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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An In-Service Program to Provide Greater Educational Opportunities for Children Attending Desegregated Classrooms in the Cairo and Egyptian School Districts, Alexander County, Illinois.

Author - Dr. Morris Osburn

GRANT-to-SCHOOL-BOARD NUMBER ONE
P.L. 88-352, Title IV, Section 405
The Civil Rights Act of 1964

Director - Mary L. Abell

Submitted by the Alexander County, Illinois
Intermediate School District

The Project Reported Herein Was Supported by a Grant
from the
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE
Office of Education

ED 055670

ABSTRACT

Title: An In-Service Program to Provide Greater Educational Opportunities for Children Attending Desegregated Classrooms in the Cairo and Egyptian School District, Alexander County, Illinois.

Written By: Dr. Morris Osburn

Submitted By: Alexander County, Illinois, Intermediate School District
Cairo School District Number One.

Director of the Program: Mrs. Mary L. Abell, Curriculum Coordinator

Objectives: The general purpose of this project is to assemble school administrative officials, teachers, and community leaders from the Cairo School District and Egyptian Community School District to participate in the following tasks:

1. Cooperatively identify and examine specific problems concerning newly desegregated classrooms in the areas below:

   (a) School-Community relations
   (b) Educational programs dealing with:

      1. Student achievement
      2. Instructural procedures and techniques
      3. Student activities
      4. Inter-group relations
      5. Assignment of students
      6. Staff Integration
      7. Mores and values
      8. Curriculum development

   (c) Administrative leadership
   (d) School Board responsibilities

2. Cooperatively identify, examine, and propose possible future action strategies to meet immediate and anticipated needs in the areas identified above.

Procedures: 1. Mrs. Mary L. Abell, Curriculum Coordinator, will serve as coordinator of the project, and through the Cairo School District will complete the necessary arrangements to initiate and conduct the activities.

2. School administrative officials will be selected to participate in the activities. These officials will be selected by their respective superintendents of the local school district and will include those presently operating desegregated schools or who will operate desegregated schools in the very near future.

3. Classroom teachers will be selected to participate in the activities. These teachers will be selected by the superintendents of the respective school district and will include those teachers who now conduct desegregated classes or are scheduled to conduct desegregated classes in the very near future.

4. Lay persons will be identified and selected by local school district superintendents as school-community leaders interested in promoting better inter-group relations in the public schools.

5. The project will be conducted on Saturdays and will continue for a period of eight Saturdays or equivalent night programs between November 1, 1966 and June 30, 1967. These conferences will be concerned specifically with the areas previously identified and will include follow-up activities designed to lead to the solution of problems of the kind and nature described herein.

6. The schedule to be utilized will include both large group and small group activity. Large group activity will be utilized to provide technical consultants the opportunity to identify specific and anticipated problems in the broad areas under consideration. Small discussion groups will be scheduled and designed: (1) to provide participants opportunity to examine and react to the problems identified: and (2) propose action strategies to deal with these problems.

7. Evaluation techniques will be developed and utilized to enable those concerned to disseminate the results of the workshops and to promote continuous activity on the part of participants in dealing with problems and solutions.

8. These activities will be attended for the first two days by personnel from the Cairo School District and the Egyptian School District. Only personnel from the Cairo District, with a small select group from the Egyptian District, observing, will participate in the remaining sessions. The participants of both districts will be provided an opportunity to gain insight into the psychological and sociological effects of segregation; correspondingly the aforementioned will participate in activities whereby they will identify, examine, and select programmatic solutions to problems occasioned by total desegregation.

Results and conclusions:

1. School administrators and teachers assembled in eight sessions of five hours each addressing themselves to problems attendant to newly desegregated classrooms and faculties in Cairo School District Number One, Cairo, Illinois.

2. School Administrators and teachers of Egyptian District Number Five attended the first two sessions, thereafter sending only observers.

3. The first two sessions were devoted to exploring the nature of prejudice, setting the stage for future freedom for interaction among participants. (Dr. Smith and Dr. Gertrude Noar)

4. Instructional programs and techniques were presented and discussed.

    a. Non-graded primary (Dr. Rebecca Baker)
    b. Departmental grouping (Dr. McCollough)
    c. Flexible scheduling (Betty Smith)
    d. I.T.A. (Virginia Walker)
    e. Techniques of working with groups within groups (Mary Ann Willis)

5. Following the large group sessions two steering committees began work on activating plans and ideas developed by faculty members in various sessions.

6. The final activity was a three day workshop for all participants - preparation for activating the organizational patterns developed to meet our needs.

7. Conclusions: The project succeeded in making teachers and administrators aware that good relations are based on trust and respect. Understanding is essential in dealing with newly desegregated portions of the school population.

   New organizational patterns and techniques must be developed to meet our needs. The fact that our two new elementary schools, Emerson and Bennett, opened without incident proves the value of the in-service activities which sensitized the participants to the problems of desegregation.

Summary: Alexander County, at the tip of Illinois, is geographically south of parts of Kentucky and ideologically, as southern as the deep south. Historically the schools of the county had a dual system, separate faculties but shared administrative personnel. Following the Civil Rights Act of 1954 moves were made toward integration. The Open Enrollment policy encouraged a few negro children to enroll in predominately white classes. Year by year this number increased. The two junior high schools, students and faculties, were integrated in the 1966-1967 school year, and plans for occupancy of two new elementary attendance centers included the merging of all students and teachers (1967-1968). To enable teachers and administrative staff members evaluate the problems and make realistic plans, a proposal was made and granted to provide in-service training under a federal grant, Title IV of Public Law 88-352 The Civil Rights Act of 1964.

The two school districts in the county were included in the overall planning since problems in the area of complete integration were similar. The early sessions, November 17 and November 22 were shared by all personnel: 58 from Cairo, District Number One and 44 from Egyptian District Number Five. Later sessions were composed of all District Number One personnel and only observers from District Number Five.

The program schedule included :

1. Eight sessions of 5 hours each in the opening phase.
2. Stipends based on $3.00 per hour for 5 hours.
3. Consultants were brought in at $75.00 per day plus expenses. They presented new ideas and concepts in educational practice.
4. The Western Kentucky Human Relations Center served in an advisory capacity securing the services of consultants and providing funds for stipends.
5. Large group activities provided time for presentations by consultants to all the group assembled.
6. Small group activities provided discussion groups based on grade or interest areas. Recorders kept notes on reactions of participants.
7. Selected participants were asked to assemble this information and formulate plans for new organizational patterns to meet changing needs.

8. The final activity was to acquaint teachers in District Number One, Cairo, Illinois, of the suggested changes in curriculum and organizational patterns, involve the entire faculties of both elementary schools in final plans to implement total integration.

Consultive personnel:

Dr. J. D. Smith, University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois
Dr. Gertrude Noar, Anti-defamation League, Washington, D. C.
Dr. E[redacted], University of Texas, Austin, Texas
Mrs. Betty Smith, Western Kentucky Experimental Schools, Bowling Green, Kentucky
Mrs. Mattie Crossley, Reading Consultant, Memphis Public Schools, Memphis, Tennessee
Mrs. Mary Ann Willis, Reading Consultant, Little Egypt Development Program, Metropolis, Illinois
Dr. Rebecca Baker, Early Childhood Education Specialist, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, Illinois
Dr. Murphy, Science Professor, Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, Kentucky
Mrs. Neta Thomas, Consultant, New York State Department of Education, Albany, New York
Dr. Newman Walker, Superintendent, Paducah Public Schools, Paducah, Kentucky
Dr. Charles McCollough, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction, Paducah Public Schools, Paducah, Kentucky
Mrs. Virginia Walker, Elementary Supervisor, Paducah Public Schools, Paducah, Kentucky
Western Kentucky Human Relations Center Personnel included:
Dr. Morris Osburn, Director
Dr. James Beck
Mr. Frank Yeager

Objective evaluation for the activities of this program is lacking. Subjective evaluation indicates that it was a most productive experience. Comments from teachers indicated a change in attitudes, for example:

"Since our in-service training sessions I feel free to speak my mind and not side-step an issue with racial overtones."
"It was good to talk of the reservations I have about my ability to work with mixed groups."
"More than ever I can realize we are working with children not the white or non-white."

Concern was expressed over parental reaction to teachers of a different race. The superintendent's office did not receive any calls from white parents requesting a change to teachers of the white race. In fact, one parent has requested the reverse because she felt the Negro teacher was better qualified. Parents were informed of the changes from self-contained classrooms to non-graded and departmental plans.

It is of interest to note that in desegregation all teachers in the system were retained, self-contained classrooms remain only in the early months of first grade. Negro and white administrators are functioning in a professional manner acceptable to faculty and parents.